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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Joint workplan of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides a review of the implementation of the 2007 joint workplan of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. It also contains the joint workplan for 2008.

* E/CN.6/2008/1.

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I. Introduction

1. On the basis of Commission on the Status of Women resolution 39/5 of 31 March 1995 and Commission on Human Rights resolution 1997/43 of 11 April 1997, a joint workplan is prepared annually for the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The workplan for 2007 is contained in document A/HRC/4/68-E/CN.6/2007/5.

2. Cooperation between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Division for the Advancement of Women continued in 2007 with the goal of achieving equality between women and men and the promotion and protection of women's human rights. The major activities that were carried out jointly are outlined below, as are plans for joint activities for 2008.

II. Review of the implementation of the joint workplan for 2007

A. General

3. During the implementation of the current joint workplan, the exchange of information continued between OHCHR, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The Division and OHCHR continued to cooperate within the framework of inter-agency mechanisms, especially the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, under the leadership of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. OHCHR and the Division participated in the sixth session of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality from 21 to 22 February 2007 in New York, contributing to discussions on all items on the agenda. Both entities participated actively in several of the task forces of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, including its task force on violence against women, for which the Division and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) serve as co-convenors. The task force aims to ensure a coordinated follow-up to General Assembly resolution 61/143 entitled "Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women" and the implementation of recommendations of the study. OHCHR also contributed an input to the inventory of activities of the United Nations system on violence against women, compiled by the Division as part of the activities of the task force on violence against women.

4. Both entities participated in the Inter-Agency Cooperation Group against Trafficking in Persons, chaired by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, as well as in decision-making concerning grants by the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women. The Division and OHCHR also collaborated within the context of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, specifically in the cluster on the advancement of women, for which the Division, together with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), serves as cluster leader.

5. The Division for the Advancement of Women and OHCHR continued to exchange documents, reports and information relating to the work of the human

rights treaty bodies, including concluding observations, comments, general recommendations and views relating to communications, and circulated those documents to the chairpersons and members of the treaty bodies. As part of its efforts to disseminate the Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women (A/61/122/Add.1 and Corr.1), the Division wrote to all members of human rights treaty bodies bringing the study to their attention and encouraging their continued attention to that issue.

6. The Division for the Advancement of Women and OHCHR continued to update their databases and websites, and the Division regularly followed up with OHCHR on progress in updating the treaty body database. OHCHR and the Division disseminated information about the human rights treaty system, including on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

B. Support for human rights treaty bodies

7. The Division for the Advancement of Women and OHCHR continued to support the work of human rights treaty bodies and implementation of the major international human rights instruments. Work to support the reform of the treaty body system also continued.

8. On 15 January 2007, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women held an exchange of views with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on issues of common interest, and in particular on the decision of 11 October 2006 by the Secretary-General to transfer responsibility for servicing the Committee to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights also delivered a statement on 23 July 2007 at the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the work of the Committee.

9. OHCHR attended briefings convened by the Division for entities of the United Nations system in advance of the sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. OHCHR also contributed to the preparation of joint reports by United Nations country teams that were submitted to the Committee. OHCHR continued to provide information on the working methods of the six human rights treaty bodies serviced by OHCHR for the reports prepared by the Division for the Committee on ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee, a regular item on the agenda of the Committee.

10. The Division for the Advancement of Women contributed to documentation prepared for the sixth Inter-Committee Meeting and the nineteenth meeting of the chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies, which took place in Geneva, from 18 to 20 June and 21 to 22 June 2007, respectively. In particular, the Division provided input into the report on working methods of the treaty bodies (see HRI/MC/2007/4). The Division staff participated in both meetings, as did the Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. OHCHR and the Division for the Advancement of Women supported treaty bodies in their follow-up to the recommendations of the nineteenth meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies and the sixth Inter-Committee Meeting.

11. During the year, OHCHR and the Division for the Advancement of Women, respectively, convened a number of meetings, including training seminars and other

capacity-building activities, to support implementation of human rights treaties, including concluding observations and comments at the national level.

12. Two staff members from the Division for the Advancement of Women supported the informal working session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in Geneva from 24 to 26 October 2007, hosted by the Government of Switzerland. The Division provided a draft provisional agenda and background material for use at the informal session.

13. The Division for the Advancement of Women prepared a transition note for OHCHR aimed at ensuring the smooth transfer of servicing of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs to OHCHR. The note provided detailed information on relevant work processes; gave an update on the current status in all relevant work areas; provided background information that may be relevant for servicing of the Committee; and listed actions to be taken by each office in all relevant areas.

C. Interaction with special procedures mandate holders

14. The Division for the Advancement of Women continued its interaction with special procedures mandate holders. In particular, the Division maintained contact with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, in the follow-up to the Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women. The work of the Special Rapporteur towards the development of a set of indicators with a particular focus on measuring State responses to combat violence against women, was presented at an expert group meeting convened by the Division from 8 to 10 October 2007, co-organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women, the Economic Commission for Europe Statistics Division and the United Nations Statistics Division, in collaboration with ECA, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. Representatives of OHCHR also participated in that meeting.

15. The Division continued to liaise with the independent expert guiding the United Nations Study on violence against children on follow-up to the Study.

D. Support for intergovernmental bodies

16. The President of the Human Rights Council addressed the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-first session in March 2007.

17. Coordination of the preparation of reports to be submitted to intergovernmental bodies continued. OHCHR provided an input to the reports of the Secretary-General on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women (E/CN.6/2008/6), and on ending female genital mutilation (E/CN.6/2008/3), both of which will be submitted to the Commission at its fifty-second session. OHCHR contributed to the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system, submitted to the Economic and Social Council (see E/2007/64) as well as to the report of the Secretary-General on measures taken and progress achieved in

follow-up to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (see A/62/178).

III. Joint workplan for 2008

18. Several recent developments will shape future cooperation between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Division for the Advancement of Women, including the implementation of the decision of the Secretary-General to transfer responsibility for supporting the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to OHCHR in Geneva as of 1 January 2008 and related transfer of four posts at the professional level (2 P-4, 1 P-3 and 1 P-2) and one post at the General Service level (see the programme budget for 2008-2009, sections 9 and 23), as well as the establishment in OHCHR of a Women's Human Rights and Gender Unit, pursuant to the High Commissioner's action and strategic management plans. The Secretary-General's follow-up to the recommendation of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence to establish one United Nations entity focused on gender equality and women's empowerment, and any action Member States may take thereon, will also impact on such future cooperation. Accordingly, OHCHR and the Division will keep the joint workplan for 2008 under review and update it as necessary during the coming year.

A. Promotion of the human rights of women and mainstreaming of gender perspectives in the field of human rights

19. Following the transfer of responsibilities for servicing the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to OHCHR, the Division for the Advancement of Women will continue to implement its mandated responsibilities with regard to women's human rights in follow-up to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and other relevant mandates. The Division will cooperate with OHCHR and exchange information of relevance in support of the work of human rights treaty bodies and enhanced mainstreaming of gender perspectives in their work.

20. The Division for the Advancement of Women and OHCHR will continue to support the participation of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women and of the President of the Human Rights Council in each other's sessions and the participation of the Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in the sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women.

21. The Division for the Advancement of Women and OHCHR will continue to seek input and provide comments for reports to be submitted to intergovernmental bodies and special procedures, as relevant. The Division will continue to monitor progress with respect to integrating gender perspectives in the work of intergovernmental and expert bodies.

22. The Division for the Advancement of Women and OHCHR will exchange information and cooperate on follow-up to any actions the Commission on the

Status of Women will take at its fifty-second session as well as any actions the Human Rights Council will take in 2008, as relevant. The Division and OHCHR will also intensify proactive exchange of information and seek to collaborate in assisting the Human Rights Council to integrate gender perspectives in its work, including during panel discussions and side events, and OHCHR will regularly provide information about the Council's work programme and related documentation.

B. Technical cooperation, advisory services and meetings

23. The Division for the Advancement of Women and OHCHR will improve early information exchange and coordination on technical cooperation activities, in particular by sharing plans for such activities, and cooperate whenever possible in such activities. Staff from each entity will be invited to contribute to and participate in relevant workshops, as appropriate. OHCHR will also invite the Division to participate in relevant meetings of the field representatives of OHCHR.

24. The Division for the Advancement of Women will continue to participate as a member of the reference group for the Action 2 global programme on strengthening United Nations support for the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide.

C. Awareness-raising and outreach

25. The Division for the Advancement of Women maintained a page on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women with a dedicated page per session of the Committee, up until and including the thirty-ninth session. The Division will establish a link to the website of OHCHR to refer users to that site for all information pertaining to the fortieth and subsequent sessions of the Committee. It will continue to provide information on its site about all developments in the area of women's human rights, including a link to the WomenWatch portal.

D. Inter-agency cooperation

26. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Division for the Advancement of Women will continue to cooperate within the framework of inter-agency mechanisms, including the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality under the leadership of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, as well as to work together to advance gender equality and respect for women's human rights.